WHAT IS ISLAM?

An excerpt from the book "The Forgotten Monotheism"

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It is often repeated that Islam is so easy to understand, yet when you take a look at the reality you see that the understanding which people have of Islam is entirely chaotic. The answers to questions such as “What is Islam”, “What is a Muslim”, “What is shirk” and “What is a mushrik” are anything but clear. If Islam is really so easy to understand – and it really is – why do we find so many differences in opinions? The answers to these questions need to be clear: The ambiguity definitely does not lie in the explanations provided by the Creator. It lies solely in the creation. Some people do not want to understand it from the beginning, others cannot or do not want to accept it for their own reality and implement it into their own lives.

In many narrations the Prophet (saws) was asked: “Oh Messenger of Allah! What is Islam?” So he replied: “That you worship Allah alone and you do not associate anything with Him”. Several scholars repeatedly emphasized that you must only refer to the Qur’an and the Sunnah for the question “What is Islam?”. This question has been answered with the definition given by the Prophet (saws) – there is no need of philosophy and complex thinking. Even Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab knew the answer and they rejected it because they knew it and understood it so well. It was the philosophers who began to worship their (own) intellect and then placed it above the Qur’an and Sunnah. They thought that “La Ilaaha illa Allah” means “there is no god, no creator, no giver of life, no provider…except Allah”. So Allah (swt) punished them with their ignorance. Whoever comprehends the Qur’an must consequently know that “ilaah” means “one who is worshipped” and not for instance god or creator, as it is claimed.

The mushrikoon knew with surety that La Ilaaha illa Allah means there is no one worthy of worship except Allah. They said clearly:

{إِلَـهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ أَجَعَلَ الْآلِهَةَ}

“Has he made all those who are worshipped (aalihah) into one ilaah? Verily, this is really something very strange!” [Surah Saad 38:5]

Quite evidently they meant to inquire: “Does he (Muhammad (saws)) want to make all those whom we worship into one worshipped alone?” When the philosophers come across such verses as well as many other similar verses, they become overwhelmed with confusion.

When Musa (as) and his people passed a group of people who were worshipping idols, did not the people of Musa say:

{اجْعَل لَّنَا إِلَـهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ}

“…make for us (such) an ilaah the way they have aalihah.” [Surah Al-'Araaf 7:138]

The word ilaah in this verse here does not mean “make a creator for us, the way they have so many creators”. It rather means: “Make for us one worshipped just like they also have many worshipped”. Whoever reads the commentaries of these philosophers concerning such verses, will find that their minds are confused. Even though some people regard these as the greatest scholars who ever existed in history. In reality it is they who are amongst the most ignorant people concerning Allah and His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saws).

Regard it as a poison, which is taught in the majority of the so-called Islamic universities as the fundament of belief in Islam – a poison which brought us finally into this miserable condition, wherein we find ourselves today.

Thus, the majority of the mushrikoon knew the meaning of La Ilaaha illa Allah and understood that it meant to whorship none but Allah. To an even greater extent it was clear to them, that He is the One and Only Creator, Life-Giver and Provider. Many verses in the Qur’an support this fact:

{وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ}

"And if you were to ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law)', they will certainly reply: 'Allah.' How are they then deluded away (from Allah and from worshipping him exclusively)?" [Surah Al-Ankaboot 29:61]

The poison continues to press forward. In the last centuries it dug its way through and finally reached the root of this deen; now it is the turn of the crystal clear definition of Islam to be attacked. Shaytaan1 wishes to deface and change Allah's religion – just like he did many times before. So, there came the Messengers to the nations who were absolutely convinced that they are Muslims and that Allah loves them. However, the Prophets came and told them clearly that which was unheard for them, inconceivable and unimaginable: "You are mushrikoon and not Muslims".

Consequently, there was war – and this is how the battle between good and evil, between Islam and shirk began and is proceeding; since the first appearance of shirk among the people of Nuh (as) until the Day of Resurrection. Such is Allah's (swt) Will; howsoever He has decreed it in His infinite Wisdom.

Whoever understands the scheme of Shaytaan in this battle also grasps the degree of his crookedness. The people of every community did not fall into shirk from one day to the other. No, in fact as time went by they forgot what Allah actually wanted from them, similar to the nation of Nuh (as). It costs Shaytaan a long process to make people think that they are secure and will always remain Muslims. As if he slowly put them into a deep sleep, nothing left for them but to wake up as mushrikoon – not even knowing or understanding why they are not Muslims anymore. Such the cursed one has always done.

The reader, may Allah guide him and us all to Islam and may Allah let us die in Islam, must be aware that perhaps many people who consider themselves as

Muslims are full of this poison. And confronted with the reality of the basis of Islam some of them in fact will be in need of urgent help to strengthen them in their original and real faith. Allah says:

{وَانطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى آلِهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ}

"And the leaders among them went about (saying): Go on, and remain constant to your aalihah (those whom you are worshipping)! For this is truly a thing designed (against you)!" [Surah Saad 38:6]

And Allah says:

{اتَّخَذُواْ أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُواْ إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُواْ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لاَّ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ}

"They took their scholars and their monks to be their lords besides Allah, and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam, while they were commanded to worship none but One Ilaah: La Ilaaha illa huwa. Glorified is He (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him)." [Surah At-Tawbah 9:31]

May Allah (swt) let us be of those on whom He will bestow His Mercy, may He let us die as Muslims in order to escape His terrible punishment and enter His Paradise. In reality, it is not necessary to explain to a Muslim that one can never be a Muslim as long as this person worships anything other than Allah (swt). If Islam means to worship only Allah alone and if Muslim means someone who only worships Allah alone, how can a person then be that someone who only worships Allah alone and simultaneously worships something other than Allah.

How can one stick to the view that this person fulfills the fundamental prerequisites of being a Muslim? Therefore, know – may Allah let you and us enter Paradise – that a Muslim is a person who worships Allah alone and a mushrik is a person who worships something other than Allah or worships something besides

Allah. Therefore, a mushrik can never be a Muslim, whether he knows this or not. As a matter of fact, being a Muslim or being a mushrik are both states in which a person finds himself – irrelevant of his acknowledgement. In order to explain and prove this, I have listed irrefutable and clear evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The importance of this issue will not become clear to anyone as long as he does not know that committing shirk does not just mean to prostrate before someone else besides Allah or to pray to him or to bring him a sacrifice. In fact, some of the greatest forms of shirk consist of obeying someone or following someone who prohibits the permitted and permits the prohibited, or creates laws which are in contradiction to Islam – whether that lawmaker is a ruler or a scholar or whosoever.

Whoever knows this clearly recognizes without a doubt that a majority of people worship their political leaders, their scholars, their constitutions, their homeland, their freedom, their intellect and the majority of the people (democracy). By obeying and following these people or objects and accepting and legitimizing them, they fall into the act of worshipping, as Allah has defined and revealed to us clearly in the Qur'an.